



Let's talk about intimate partner violence

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Goals

- Explore common beliefs and myths related to intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Review the “need to know” basics to be effective in your role
- Learn what supports are helpful and can lead to greater safety for all
- Find resources to learn more about IPV and to enhance your practice
- Engage in an open forum to ask questions and share what’s coming up in your practice related to intimate partner violence

Centering with our breath



Poll

What are some of my core beliefs and assumptions about IPV (also known as domestic violence)?

1. Alcohol and drug use is a leading cause of intimate partner violence
2. A lot of couples engage in mutual intimate partner violence
3. Anger management is a helpful service to offer a person who is abusive to their partner
4. Many victims of intimate partner violence choose their relationship with their partner over their children's safety

Answer each question: TRUE FALSE NOT SURE

What is intimate partner violence?

A **pattern of** assaultive and coercive **behaviors** designed to **dominate and control a partner through fear and intimidation.**

Occurs across all racial and ethnic groups, gender and gender identities, sexual orientations, education and income levels.

Ganley, 1995; NCDVTMH, 2017

It's more than physical abuse...



- Verbal and emotional abuse
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Isolation
- Coercion
- Other forms of abuse

Intimate Partner Violence

- **INTENT** of the abusive partner, and use of tactics to control, have power over, to make their partner comply with their wishes, or to induce fear
- **MEANING** of the violence to the victimized partner
- **EFFECT** of these actions on the victimized partner's sense of well-being, safety and autonomy

Adapted from KCSDV DV Manual for Child Welfare

Why intimate partner violence is NOT mutual

Let's distinguish between how we define IPV and other types of violence:

- Fighting
- High level of conflict in relationship
- Situational violence without a pattern or intent to control

Pause



7 Factors to Consider from the Victim's Viewpoint



- 1. Disclosure** will lead to **loss of custody**
- 2. Fear of retaliation** by abusive partner
- 3. Losing supports** for day-to-day living
- 4. Others' perceptions of the abusive partner as more competent,** and damage to their own sense of confidence and well-being resulting from abuse

- 5. Unsure they are experiencing intimate partner violence**
because partner undermines their sense of identity, sanity, and denies reality of what is happening. Blames self and feels shame.
- 6. Not identifying as victim of IPV** because of own childhood and familial experiences
- 7. Impact of broader societal conditions** (including stigma, racism and lack of equitable access to resources) and **own lived experiences** may affect how parent engages with this system

Parenting Capacity and IPV

- Abusive partners often deliberately undermine and block their partners' ability to attend to their children's needs
- Despite the effects of IPV, we know that survivors are resourceful and make efforts to protect their children's safety and well-being
- Ask ourselves: what is the attachment relationship like with each of the adult partners who are parenting?
 - Maintaining regular, safe contact with the *protective parent who is experiencing IPV*, once the family is involved with the child welfare system

Parents experiencing intimate partner violence

May...

- Agree with their partner to placate them, comply with their demands
- Discipline the children severely
- Stay with or return to their partner

In order to avoid...

- Angering the partner and “provoking” assault against self or their children
- Worse punishment or abuse by the partner
- Stalking and escalation of the violence if they are living apart.

Domestic violence survivors’ efforts to protect their children can be misunderstood as poor parenting.

Best Practices for Supporting Families Affected by Intimate Partner Violence

Universal Screening, Interviewing Tips, and Risk Assessment

Universal Screening

- Meet privately with each member of the family
- Use normalizing and universalizing language
- Ask questions related to pattern of IPV, while gauging victimized partner's readiness to talk
- Understand the effects of being “in the system”
- Establish partnerships with DV service providers in families' local communities

Helpful Things to Say if Parent Discloses IPV

- **Share your concerns.**
 - Ask: “Do you have any worries right now?”
- **You aren’t responsible for your partner’s violence (or behavior).**
- **We know people often stay with partners for a number of reasons...**
 - Can you tell me a bit about your situation and relationship?
- **What have you tried in the past to stay safe and protect your children?**

Adapted from Team Decision Making and Domestic Violence, FVPF (2009)

Tips for Interviewing Abusive Partners

- Be steadfast in the belief that abuse is always unacceptable
- Use multiple sources of data to assess change, ongoing patterns of intimidation, control and use of violence, and safety
- Be respectful and empathic, but do not collude
- Be aware of your own responses

Some people assume that when the couple separates, or the relationship ends, then the risk is over. Statistics tell us otherwise.

Often, **safety risks** for the victim and their children **increase after separation, or when the relationship ends.**

Guidelines for Assessing Safety and Risk for All

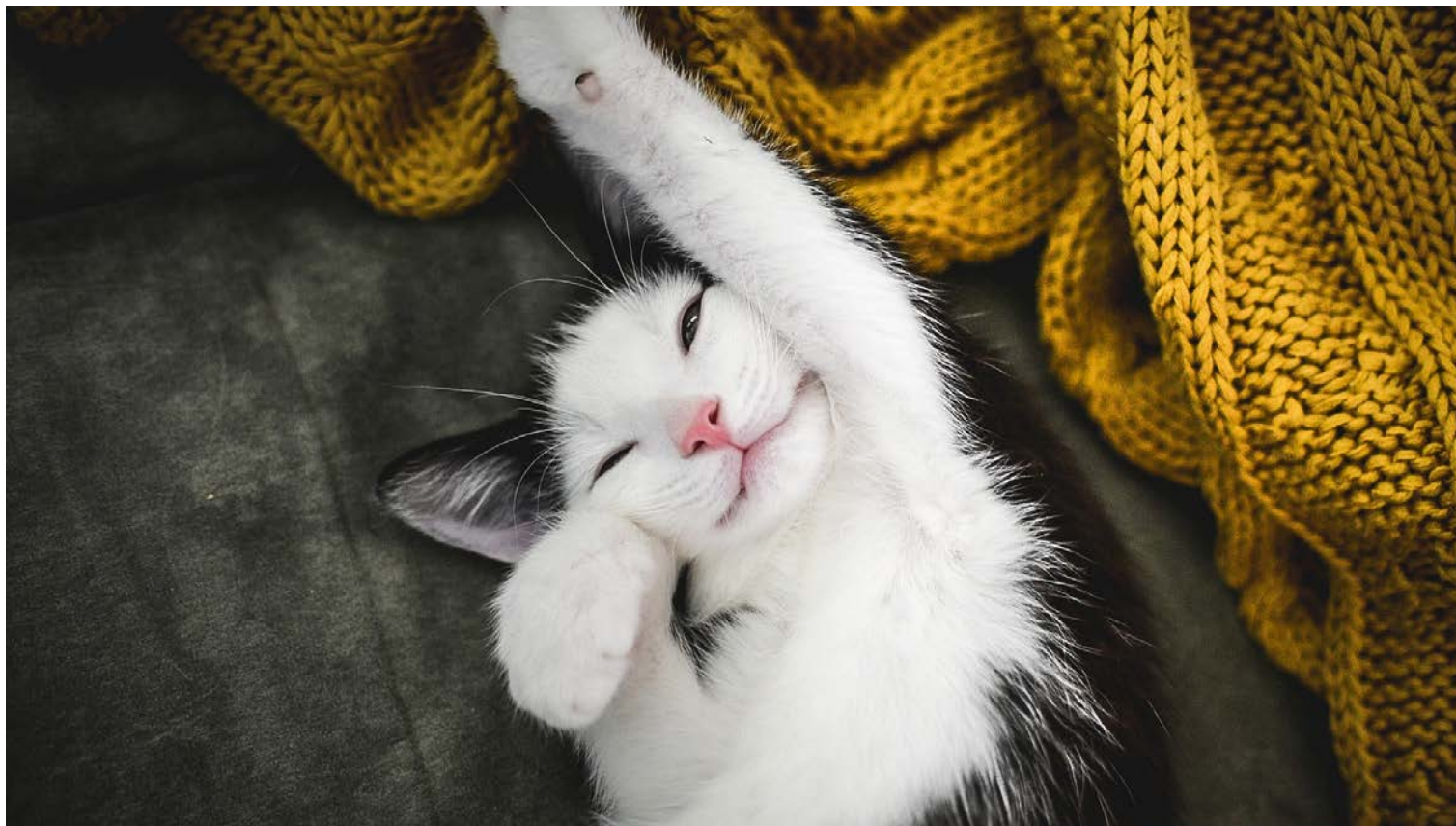
- **Safety and risk is fluid and may change over time**
 - **Be aware of the touchpoints for increased danger or risk** (court, loss of income, increased isolation, separation, increased autonomy of victimized partner, etc.)
- **Know the risk factors associated with greater risk of harm**
 - Increase in frequency or severity of physical violence in the past year
 - Use of weapon, threatened with gun/weapon
 - Threat to kill partner, children, or themselves
 - Attempt to choke or strangle victimized partner
 - Jealousy (accusations leading to violence, stalking, restriction of freedom and autonomy)
- **Screening for risk is not a one-time event.** Revisit periodically.

Jacqueline Campbell, PHD, RN, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, Danger Assessment Protocol: www.dangerassessment.org

How do we hold the safety of children and victimized partners together?

- Are we basing child safety on forced choices for the parent experiencing intimate partner violence?
 - Blame victimized parents for staying or returning as sign of putting partner over well-being of their children
 - “Kick ‘em out” or “Figure it out”
 - Expectation of no contact after separation
- What expectations do we have for holding the abusive partner accountable for harms done?

Stretch



Supporting Greater Safety and Well-Being for All

Coordinated Service Planning

Considerations for Service Planning

- Know your local domestic violence service providers
- Facilitate access to resources that promote greater stability and opportunity
- Understand how referrals to mental health and substance use resources may hit roadblocks for partners experiencing IPV
- Gauge progress and change (rather than checking off boxes of services completed) for greater safety

Understanding Barriers to Care: Stigma and Coercion

- Stigma about intimate partner violence can lead to shame, blame, isolation of the victimized partners
- Abusive partners may also **use stigma** related to mental health and substance use **as a coercive tactic**:
 - Undermining sanity
 - Discouraging from seeking help
 - Discrediting partner to sources of safety and protection
 - Using threats and stigma to influence authorities, such as CPS
 - Controlling access to alcohol/substances, forcing to use, forcing into illegal activities

http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCDVTMH_NDVH_MHSUCoercionSurveyReport_2014-2.pdf

Alcohol and substance use is NOT a leading cause of intimate partner violence



Unlinking abusive partner's alcohol and substance use as cause of intimate partner violence

- IPV is an **intentional pattern** of abusive and control over partner
- Abusive partners often try to excuse their behavior by saying “It wasn’t me...it was the alcohol” [or other drug, substance]
- Studies show high correlation between abusive partner’s use and increase in violence **within a pattern of coercive control and intimidation.**

Bennett & Bland (2008): Zilberman & Blume (2005)

A word about what's NOT best practice for IPV

- Anger management classes for abusive partners
- Joint counseling sessions for couples
- Seeing parents and children together during family time, when safety concerns related to IPV are present

Selected Resources

Selected Resources

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health:

- **Guide for Engaging & Supporting Parents Affected by Domestic Violence** <http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/publications-products/guide-for-engaging-and-supporting-parents-affected-by-domesticviolence/>
- **Family-Centered Toolkit for Domestic Violence Programs** <http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/publications-products/family-toolkit/>
- **Mental Health and Substance Use Coercion in the Context of IPV Toolkit** <http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/publications-products/coercion-related-to-mental-health-and-substance-use-in-the-context-of-intimate-partner-violence-a-toolkit/>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network - resources for caregivers on children exposed to domestic violence:

- <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/children-and-domestic-violence-parents-fact-sheet-series>

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence – resources on state coalitions and services: <https://ncadv.org/state-coalitions>

National DV Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org>

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence: <https://www.nrcdv.org/>

Rachel Louise Snyder (2019). **No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us**. NY: Bloomsbury Publishing (Available in paperback: ISBN: 9781635570977).

For more information

Check out the three-part archived series on “Supporting ITCP Families Affected by Domestic Violence” for Zero To Three (2021):

- Part 1- Understanding the Dynamics of DV <https://youtu.be/slbXQbyEb-c>
- Part 2- Best Practices for Engaging with Families Affected by DV <https://youtu.be/Zyr3MEa9qQg>
- Part 3- Supporting Families Affected by DV to Achieve Better Outcomes <https://youtu.be/V60i3oeMN2s>

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OPEN FORUM

Questions and reflections on supporting families affected by intimate partner violence